



Statement by Senator Dianne Feinstein
*On the Nomination of Representative Porter Goss
to be Director of the Central Intelligence Agency*

September 21, 2004

“After much thought and a careful review of the record, I voted today to confirm the nomination of Representative Porter Goss to be Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (DCI). But I do have some serious concerns – especially about the impact of this nomination on intelligence reform and his record of partisanship in Congress.

I believe the President should have the prerogative to appoint who he wants to be the DCI, or for any other senior position, subject only to the requirement that the person be qualified for the job. As a former CIA officer, a former Chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, and a former Army intelligence officer, I think he is certainly qualified. If he is confirmed, I would hope that he demonstrates the necessary independence required of the DCI. But there are still some open questions, which gave me some hesitancy in supporting the nomination.

Will the Porter Goss who takes the helm of the CIA be the fair, reasoned, knowledgeable chairman I watched lead a joint Congressional investigation into the 9/11 attacks? Or will he be the partisan who has been making highly charged comments and attacking Senator John Kerry on behalf of the Bush administration?

It is imperative that the new DCI provide the President and the Congress with non-partisan, unbiased intelligence and it is also critical that this nominee not be an impediment to the overall intelligence reform effort.

It is, therefore, deeply troubling that in an interview regarding Senate Committee investigations of abuse in military prisons in Iraq, Representative Goss recently commented ‘we’ve got the circus in the Senate, which is always the likely place to look for the circus.’ Well, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence is still the oversight committee for the CIA, and in my mind, we need to have some mutual respect between the committee and whoever is DCI. The comment that the Senate was a ‘circus’ certainly shows a lack of respect, not only for the Intelligence Committee, but for the entire Senate.

In the wake of intelligence failures before 9/11 and with regard to weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, it has become very clear that the structure of our Intelligence Community must be changed and we need to dramatically improve how intelligence is analyzed and distributed.

I deeply believe that as Congress moves ahead with intelligence reform, we need to create a Director of National Intelligence with the budgetary, statutory and personnel authority to truly manage our nation's 15 intelligence agencies. This position must have the power to develop intelligence strategies, set priorities and move around the players to accomplish these goals. This was a top recommendation of the 9/11 Commission and of the Joint Senate-House Committee on 9/11 and it is urgent that we proceed with this reform.

The new CIA director – who is also the nominal head of the entire Intelligence Community, as it is presently configured – will play a critical role in determining how the intelligence reform efforts proceed. And it is my hope that the nominee I voted for today proves to be a leader in this effort, rather than a partisan infighter and obstructionist. As a member of the Intelligence Committee, I will be watching this issue very carefully.”

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